BULL. BOT. SURV. INDIA
Vol. 19, Nos. 1-4 : pp. 23-24, 1977

FLORA OF RAJASTHAN, EAST OF THE ARAVALLI

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The vegetation of the Aravalli Hills and the part east of it are floristically similar as pointed out by Sir G. King (1878). Mt. Abu, the highest part of the Aravalli, attracted quite a number of distinguished naturalists like G. King (1878), J. F. Duthie (1886), Macadam (1890) and Blatter and McCann (1915-'16). In recent years it is Dr. S. K. Jain (1962), who gave a very critical analysis of the relict flora of Mt. Abu and Kanodia et Rao (1965-66) presented a good enumeration paper on the grasses. The flora of eastern part in recent years has been extensively explored by the local botanists as well as the staff of the Botanical Survey of India, first from the Western Circle, Poona (BSI) and then from the Central Circle, Allahabad (BSA).

The flora of the eastern part is approximately represented by c. 1400 species, of which c. 157 are localised to Mt. Abu and c. 300 to the eastern region excluding Mt. Abu. In the eastern part we see some of the best *dry deciduous forests* localised along the narrow strips in the more humid tracts of the Aravalli. Here grow some of the good trees also available in the forests of the adjoining regions like *Anogeissus latifolia, Bauhinia racemosa, Diospyros exsculpta, Schrebera swietenioides, Saccopetalum tomentosum, Terminalia tomentosa, Phyllanthus emblica, Soymida febrifuga, Hymenodictyon excelsum, Mitragyna parvifolia, Aegle marmelos, Albizia odoratissima* etc. It is to be noted that there was a time when lions and tigers roamed in Rajasthan. Today lions become a myth and tigers are confined to few sanctuaries. But the presence of tigers points to the presence of good forests in the past. This raises the hope that if large scale tree plantations are made the extreme climate of the region may be modified to a great extent. It appears to be reasonable to make multicultural plantations, in preference to the more profitable monocultural one, in order to preserve the biological balance. Side by side there should be an effort to translate the very good work done by the members of the Arid zone Institute, on the improvement of forage plants. Forage production in the foot-hill regions in the tract is not a problem but transportation and storage is difficult. The fodder problem of the State may be solved to a great extent if this resource can be properly harnessed.

Apart from this, Rajasthan is also very rich in the African elements, particularly those related to our cultivated plants belonging to the families like *Cucurbitaceae, Malvaceae, Rhamnaceae, Tiliaceae, Pedaliaceae, Poaceae (Gramineae)* etc. It is high time that a flora for this area should be written. The genera having economic plants should be subjected to critical studies and promising material should be handed over to those engaged in the exploitation of the natural resources like Cytogeneticists, Horticulturists, Agriculturists etc. This is the way in which pure taxonomic studies can take part in the economic progress of the country.

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